

***By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor***

As 2012 comes to a close, many of us are wondering what the new year may bring.

There are uncertain economic times ahead, considering that Congress apparently is still miles apart on avoiding the so-called “fiscal cliff.”

And, since the pre-Christmas school shootings in Newtown, Conn., gun control discussion is also taking up pages and pages of newspapers and hours and hours of TV time.

These two issues are likely to consume much of the news in the next few weeks and months. Oh, and let’s not forget all of the unread and unforeseen parts of Obamacare that will become effective in the coming year and next.

While some like to make predictions, I don’t. Being in the newspaper reporting business, I prefer writing about what has happened and how that affects us.

That’s what this week’s special issue, we call the Progress Issue, does.

It takes a look back during the past year, centering much of the space on our business, thus economic, improvements. Our local business community is not standing still.

Businesses which have expanded, moved, changed names and added services are photographed. New homes are pictured, as well as a review of other such statistical information as births and deaths.

This year, only one new business opened its doors. That’s low compared to previous years. However, there are several new businesses

“in the wings” that are finalizing plans and locations for opening in 2013.

Also in this week’s special edition, selected guest columnists write about the past accomplishments of the city, the hospital and Chamber of Commerce.

What’s most interesting to me is the review of the week-by-week news of the past year. Even after writing about much of it, there are events I’d forgotten that happened in 2012, events that have or will affect all of us.

Take some time to read through this special issue. Our staff spends a lot of time getting this special edition out each year. It’s a good way to say good-bye to 2012 and hello to 2013.